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**SUPREME COURT IN SPECIAL SESSION TO UNVEIL HISTORIC  
ARTWORK**

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Supreme Court will convene in special session on Tuesday, March 9 to unveil an historic painting which was used as the rendering for the century-old murals on the walls and ceilings of the Supreme Court courtroom.

Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald will preside at the 4 p.m. ceremony.

The artwork, which had fallen into disrepair over the past 100 years, was donated by the family of the artist, Albert Krehbiel. Through the auspices of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, the family also paid for all costs of restoration, framing and display.

Justices Rita B. Garman and Anne M. Burke, Supreme Court liaisons to the Commission, will speak at the unveiling. Jerold Solovy, a well-known Chicago attorney and chairman of the Commission, also will make comments.

Family members are among those who will be attending the event. The art will be displayed for the public beginning Wednesday, March 10, in the former Illinois Appellate courtroom in the Supreme Court Building at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Capitol Avenue.

In 1907, Krehbiel, a young man who was raised in Kansas and studied in France, was at the beginning of his career as a teacher with the Chicago Art Institute when he was unanimously chosen as the artist for the murals project. The State of Illinois chose his rendering, depicting three women representing Precedent, Justice and Record, from among submissions of 22 artists.

The piece was used to replicate the mural that now gracefully adorns the rear wall of the Supreme Court courtroom, facing the Justices as they sit in session on the bench. It is the centerpiece of the 11 mural paintings in the Supreme Court, and two others in the Illinois Appellate courtroom, created by Krehbiel between 1907 and 1911. The original painting, used to secure the commission, was placed in storage but was not immune to damage from time, water and the boyhood antics of Krehbiel's grandsons who played nearby and probably caused some of the holes which needed repair.

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## **Supreme Court in Special Session Add One**

Agass Baumgartner of Baumgartner Fine Art Restoration in Chicago did the restorative work.

Krehbiel was born in Iowa, moved to Kansas when he was six and early showed an interest in art. He attended the Art Institute of Chicago and, while there, won a traveling scholarship that enabled him to study in Paris at the Academie Julian, one of the worlds's leading art schools. While there, he won four gold medals for his paintings and received the coveted Prix de Rome.

In 1906, he returned to Chicago, married Dulah Evans, also an artist, and began to teach at the Art Institute. When he won the contract to paint the murals, he bought a barn to use as a studio and moved it to his home in Park Ridge.

After completing the 13 murals in the Illinois Supreme Court building, he spent much of his career painting landscapes in the Chicago area, Michigan, New Mexico and California. He died in the summer of 1945 on the day of his retirement from the Art Institute.

Anthony Rubano of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency said that Krehbiel was one of America's foremost Impressionist painters. He said the competition piece exhibits a general color shift toward gold which imbued the work with a richness that suits its weighty symbolism.

According to Rubano, the mural represents jurisprudence itself, and is a reminder of how law should proceed. He writes:

"The archetypal figures are characteristic of Classicism, wherein symbolic themes take priority over depictions of emotion. Three seated women represent three crucial elements of law – Justice, Precedent and Record. Central in the symmetrical composition is Justice, wearing a crown, a gold toga and a blue robe. Blue is a color often associated with clarity and truth. Although Justice is frequently depicted blindfolded, here Krehbiel chose to have her confront the viewer directly with her gaze, emphasizing the symmetry of the composition and the importance of her stature. Krehbiel replaced Justice's more typical scales with a perfectly balanced pair of lit torches, which are traditional symbols of enlightenment. To her left is Record, quill pen in hand, as she transcribes the proceedings into the Book of Law in her lap. To her right is Precedent, raising a finger as if to speak while cradling the Lamp of Knowledge with her right hand."

Jerold Solovy, commission chairman, expressed thanks to the Krehbiel family for their thoughtful gift.

"By recognizing the importance of their grandfather's 100-year-old painting and then making a decision to give the painting to the Court, the Krehbiel family has provided a gift that is important not only as a piece of art but also as a symbol of the Court's long history and of the Commission's mission to assist the Court to preserve the rich judicial history of Illinois," said Solovy. "The family's generous gifts to pay for the repairs, framing and display help assure that the painting will be seen by Illinois citizens 100 years from now."

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## **Supreme Court in Special Session Add Two**

The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission was created by law in 2007 under the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Act. Its charge is as follows: “The Commission shall assist and advise the Court in regard to the acquisition, collection, documentation, preservation, cataloging, and related matters with respect to historic aspects of buildings, objects, artifacts, documents and information, regardless of form, relating to the Illinois judiciary.”

Its nine members consist of two each appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate and the Supreme Court. The Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts serves as a member ex officio.

In addition to Solovy, members of the commission are: Cynthia Y. Cobbs, AOIC director; Pauline Montgomery, Joseph A. Power Jr., William J. Quinlan, former Gov. James R. Thompson, all of Chicago; Kim B. Fox of Champaign, Michael F. McClain of Quincy and Jane Hayes Rader of Cobden.

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